

A HISTORY OF YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

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A HISTORY OF YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Education  
Appalachian State Teachers College

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by

Edgar F. Hunter, Jr.

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## INTRODUCTION

In an interview with Professor D. J. Whitener it was suggested that the writer use as a subject for a thesis the history of an educational institution in Yancey or a surrounding county. At that time it was agreed that Yancey Collegiate Institute, Burnsville, North Carolina, would be a suitable topic provided sufficient materials were available.

The search for information began, and after some time a considerable number of records and other documentary data were located. This was discussed in a later consultation with Professor Whitener and the subject was selected.

The material used in this thesis has come from many reliable sources. Some highly treasured and very valuable records were made available by former students and patrons of the institution. For these and all other sources of information, the author is deeply indebted.

A collection of the Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, covering the entire period in which the school operated, was provided by Mrs. Sallie Beaver Butner. In these were lists of teachers, boards of trustees, enrollment figures, contributions, expenditures, and other information.

Mrs. C. R. Hamrick donated copies of two yearbooks of the school printed in 1923 and 1924. Pictures used in this work, as well as records of various organizations, a brief

history of the school, courses of study, and similar information were taken from this source.

Six copies of the school catalog published between 1916 and 1925 were secured from Mrs. C. R. Hamrick and James Hutchins. Courses of study, rosters of students, requirements of the school, lists of faculty members, and enrollment figures were found in this source.

Hutchins, a former student of the school, kept in close contact with all activities of the school during its entire existence. In addition to the catalogs, he gave valuable information through interviews, letters to the author, and a copy of his Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute.

Records of the superintendent of schools, register of deeds, and county farm agent were made available. Vital statistical information was taken from these sources.

In addition to the sources listed above, a large number of former students and patrons of the school were interviewed. Valuable information was collected from many of these who remembered various activities of the school.

The author is especially grateful to Mrs. F. W. Howell for reading the thesis, to Professor Lee F. Reynolds for his helpful suggestions and criticisms, and to Professor Whitener whose patient guidance and counsel made this thesis possible.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF YANCEY COUNTY

Yancey County, one of the first mountain counties to be formed in North Carolina, has a long history. The present county is quite different, both in area and in culture, from the Yancey County that existed over a century ago.

Yancey covers an area of approximately 311 square miles located in the western section of the state. It is bordered on the northeast by Mitchell County, on the southeast by McDowell, on the southwest by Buncombe, on the west by Madison, and on the northwest by the state of Tennessee.<sup>1</sup>

The topography is rough, and the average elevation is high. There are 15 peaks in the county that rise above 6,000 feet. Mt. Mitchell, the highest mountain in eastern America, is located in the southern part of the county. It rises to an elevation of 6,684 feet.<sup>2</sup>

There are four streams of considerable size that originate in the county. South Toe and Caney Rivers, Jacks and Crabtree Creeks all flow in a northerly direction and

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. J. C. B. Ehringhaus and Mrs. Carl Goerch, editors, North Carolina Almanac and State Industrial Guide. 1952-53. (Raleigh: The Almanac Publishing Company, 1951), pp. 633-4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

empty into the Toe River which flows along the northeast side of the county.<sup>3</sup>

Yancey was formed because of the increased amount of public service demanded by the growing population of the area. It was extremely difficult for the public officials to serve the people adequately, since it was a two days' journey over very poor roads to the county seat of either Burke or Buncombe counties, which included the area later to become Yancey County.<sup>4</sup>

#### Historical Development

The Yancey County territory was officially opened to settlement in 1778. Nine years later, in 1787, John M. Alexander and William Sharpe secured four grants of land for the territory.<sup>5</sup> Evidently, settlement began immediately, because the census of 1790 recorded approximately 80 families living in the Toe River Valley, which included the greater part of the area later to become Yancey County.<sup>6</sup>

All the land in this area belonged to Burke County,

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3 Ibid.

4 J. B. Deyton, "History of Toe River Valley," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1931), p. 26.

5 Ibid. p. 14.

6 Ibid. p. 18.



formed in 1777, until Buncombe County was formed in 1791.<sup>7</sup> From that time until the formation of Yancey the territory came under the jurisdiction of either Buncombe or Burke.

Yancey County was formed in 1833 from parts of Buncombe and Burke counties. From that time until 1872 the boundary lines of Yancey underwent drastic changes, leaving the total area of the county a little over half its original size. In 1849 a part of Yancey was taken to form a part of the newly chartered Watauga County, and another segment was given back to Buncombe County in the same year. In 1851 Madison County was formed from Yancey and Buncombe. Ten years later, in 1861, a large part of the county was used to form Mitchell County. Again in 1872 a section of Yancey was annexed to Mitchell County. All this adding to and taking from left Yancey County its present area of approximately 311 square miles.<sup>8</sup>

The newly formed county was named in honor of Bartlett Yancey, a man who had been an outstanding statesman in North Carolina for many years. Yancey was a native of Caswell County. He was graduated from the University of North

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7 Ibid., p. 26.

8 David L. Corbitt, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), p. 239.



Carolina, where he studied law. Having become very eminent in his profession, he was elected twice as a member of Congress and eight times a member of the North Carolina Senate. He was among the first men of the state to advocate public education for the masses.<sup>9</sup>

The first Yancey County courts were held at Caney River until a county seat could be established. The site was soon secured, however, and the meeting place for the court was moved on March 6, 1834. A tract of 100 acres of land for the county seat was secured from "Yellow Jacket John" Bailey.<sup>10</sup> This tract lay on a plateau about five miles from Caney River and was the most beautiful site to be found anywhere near the geographical center of the county.<sup>11</sup>

Burnsville, the county seat honors with its name Captain Otway Burns, a North Carolinian who made himself famous in the War of 1812 as commander of the privateer "Snapdragon." During his combat duty he was able to take

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<sup>9</sup> James Preston Arthur, Western North Carolina-A History, 1730-1913 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1914), pp. 178-9.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey, one of the early settlers of the county, gained considerable wealth for himself which was passed on to his many descendants. He received this nickname because of his quick temper.

<sup>11</sup> Dayton, op. cit., p. 29.

many highly valued prizes from the British fleet.<sup>12</sup> In recent years a monument of Burns was erected on the village green in Burnsville. Probably the largest number of people ever to be assembled at one place in the county, was present on the day the monument was unveiled.<sup>13</sup>

Traveling through the newly formed county was very difficult and often hazardous due to poor roads. This situation led to the passage of the first road act in 1834.<sup>14</sup> This act held all property owners responsible for the public roads through their property. Road building then became a common problem and the roads were soon greatly improved.

The first courthouse and the first jail in the new county seat were built in 1834. They were constructed of wood and became outdated in a short time. New structures of brick were built in 1836 to replace them. These served the county adequately for 72 years, when they were replaced in 1908 by the present concrete structures.<sup>15</sup> The courthouse serves as a court room and contains office space for many of the county officers.

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<sup>12</sup> Arthur, op. cit., pp. 178-9.

<sup>13</sup> James Hutchins, Personal Interview with the author, February 8, 1952.

<sup>14</sup> Deyton, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Teachers Training Class, The History and Geography of Yancey County (Burnsville: Teachers Training Class, 1930), p. 10.

### Agricultural and Industrial Development

Yancey County has accomplished its share of success in economic development during its existence, both in agriculture and industry. Before the War Between the States, most of the residents of this county lived almost exclusively from the products of their own farms. The wealth came from mines, forests and fields, but there was little need for a family to try to earn a great deal of money because there was very little to be purchased with the money by way of luxuries.<sup>16</sup> Some economic improvements were made in the years following the War Between the States, but the greater steps toward progress were held up until after 1901. This was the year in which the first railroad was built through this section. The Carolina, Clinchfield, and Ohio Railroad was built along the Yancey-Mitchell county line. It connected Johnson City, Tennessee with Spartanburg, South Carolina. This was the first major step toward improved transportation facilities to be made in this section.<sup>17</sup> The new method of transportation made it possible for the local citizens to export the excess products that they were able to produce and, in turn, to import many necessities of life that they were not able to produce at home. It also encouraged the development of the

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<sup>16</sup> Deyton, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Teachers Training Class, op. cit., p. 8.



mineral and forestry resources.

Along with the railroad came an interest in the improvement of highways throughout the county. Many of the poorly maintained roads were improved and new roads were built. By the time World War I began there was a relatively good road leading from the county seat of Yancey to the county seat of every surrounding county.<sup>18</sup>

The first settlers of Yancey County found evidence of mining that had taken place long before the first permanent settlements were made. It was believed by many that the Spanish had penetrated the mountains many years before in search of gold or other mineral wealth.<sup>19</sup> There are no records, however, of the early mineral developments of this area. There are a number of old mines throughout the eastern section of the county, which give evidence that there has been considerable mining done for a number of years. Mining on a large scale has been done for the past twelve years, especially mining for mica and feldspar. Since there are many small mines owned and operated by individuals, it would be difficult to estimate the total mineral resources. In recent years the county has been rated as one of the outstanding sections of the United States in the production of mica and feldspar.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

Since the close of World War II the Glen Raven Silk Mills Corporation has built a modern textile plant on the east side of Burnsville. This plant has proved a great asset to Yancey and surrounding counties through its large payroll. When in full operation it employs 225 men and women.<sup>20</sup>

In 1951 the Duplan Corporation completed an ultra modern textile plant on the west side of Burnsville. This plant offers employment to approximately 400 people when in full production. It is a million-dollar project, built on a site which was purchased and excavated by the citizens of the county.<sup>21</sup>

The oldest and largest business of this little mountain county continues to be that of agriculture. Great strides have been taken in recent years to increase the farm income and crop production. The local Farm Agent, Farm Home Administrator, and the Production and Marketing Association officers have rendered a great many valuable services to the farmers in recent years. Last year the total farm income, including forestry products, was estimated to be over five and a half million dollars. The 2,740 farms in the county produced over 1,400 acres of burley tobacco and approximately

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20 Torrey M. Tyner, Personal interview, May 20, 1952.

21 H. F. Bowen, Personal interview, May 6, 1952.

8,250 acres of corn. Dairy farming, which has increased at a tremendous rate since 1946, has become one of the chief sources of farm income. In the spring of 1952 there were 42 grade "A" dairies in operation. At the same time 250 farms were selling grade "C" milk. Poultry farming also has become a source of income. At the beginning of the present calendar year there were 30 poultry farms in the county with an average of over 1,000 hens each.<sup>22</sup>

### Religion

The significance of religion and denominationalism as a factor in the development of Yancey Collegiate Institute and other educational institutions in Yancey County will be discussed in the foregoing chapter of this thesis. However, the history of the county warrants a brief review of the religion of its people and the growth of churches and denominations in this area.

Since the time of the Protestant Reformation denominations have spread throughout the world. Almost inevitably, new settlements have adopted the religion dominate in the former homes and communities of the settlers. Religion in Yancey County, though not completely different, did not

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<sup>22</sup> Yancey County Farm Agent's Office, "Statistical Report for 1951". Typescript.



follow this tendency too closely. Most of the settlers of this mountain county were of Scotch-Irish descent. These came from areas where the Presbyterian denomination was influential. However, the settlers usually came in small numbers, migrating into the mountains from settlements in the Piedmont. Many hoped eventually to move on to the fertile farmlands that lay beyond the mountains. These people brought no missionaries or ministers with them; consequently, they adopted temporarily and later more permanently, the religion of the predecessors which was predominately either Baptist or Methodist. As a result the Baptist and Methodists became the leading religious sects throughout the county.<sup>23</sup>

James Anderson was the first Methodist preacher to settle west of the Blue Ridge. He was an outstanding minister of his time and had a number of descendants, who became very influential in this area. It was through the leadership of these citizens that the Methodist Church got its first foothold in the county.<sup>24</sup>

Very little is known about the first Baptist preachers in Yancey County. It is certain, though, that they greatly outnumbered the Methodists. As early as 1850 there were 29

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23 Deyton, op. cit., p. 49.

24 Ibid., p. 49.

churches in the county, 20 of which were Baptist. Only eight were Methodist and one was German Baptist, commonly known as Dunkard.<sup>25</sup>

Church services were held rather irregularly in those days; consequently, when a good preacher came into the area, it was a common practice for the people to follow him from one church to another. Often whole congregations of one church would visit another nearby church to attend its service. Denominational rivalry was very keen throughout the mountain area. Many ministers preached against denominations, other than their own, with more zeal than they preached against the sins of their people. This spirit existed until after the turn of the twentieth century. Each minister hoped to see his denomination become predominant.<sup>26</sup>

The movement to establish Yancey Collegiate Institute as a Baptist school began in the late 1890's. At least one Baptist minister, who was worried about the Baptist position in this area, warned his people, "If we don't go ahead and do something and do it quickly, these hellish Presbyterians are going to take this country".<sup>27</sup>

Before the state-supported schools came to the mountains

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951), p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 10.



each of the three strongest denominations, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian, strove to increase its number and prestige through private schools for the youngsters of its congregation. The Methodist Church began its school in 1852. This institution, known as the Burnsville Academy, offered educational training for almost half a century.<sup>28</sup> Later, in 1899, the Presbyterian Church opened the doors of the Stanley McCormick School, which operated until 1922, when it was changed to a trade school under the name of Carolina New College. It operated in this capacity for only a few years.<sup>29</sup>

The numerical dominance of the Baptists in this area today is due largely to the influence of the Baptist school, Yancey Collegiate Institute. Factors involved in the development of this influence will be discussed in the foregoing chapters of this thesis.

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28 Teachers Training Class, op. cit., p. 10.

29 H. G. Bailey, Personal Interview, December 20, 1951.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY EDUCATION IN YANCEY COUNTY

The matter of public education has been one of the leading problems faced by the citizens of Yancey County since the first settlers arrived in this area. In this chapter the development of the educational program will be discussed by periods. The first period includes the achievements made during the first half of the nineteenth century before an effective school system was developed. The second period deals with movements made during the last half of the century when more definite interest was being shown in public education for the masses. The last period includes a discussion of the secondary school movement and the improvement of the elementary schools since the turn of the century.

#### The First Schools

During the formative years of Yancey County the people were more concerned with establishing homes, driving back the wilderness, and making a living for their families than in a formal education for their children. In many cases, families were too poor to pay tuition fees or help provide a school building in their community. In most instances there was a task for each child to do at home by

the time he was old enough to travel to and from school by himself. There was really no great demand for a formal education by the youth who would follow the footsteps of his parents as a frontier farmer in a section where there was little business activity. The life of the early settlers usually consisted of long hours of laborious duties the year round, with recreation of a limited nature occasionally at night and a trip to the church of his choice on Sunday. The settlers' lives were very individualistic, with little interest in activities outside their own immediate surroundings.

The fact that the masses were not interested in an education is verified by the census of 1850, which showed that only 962 adults, out of 7,809 reported, could read and write.<sup>1</sup> The facts listed above do not mean, however, that there were no schools taught during this period. Although few formal records have been kept of the early schools, state records show that the county participated in the State Literary Fund as early as 1844.<sup>2</sup>

The first schools were taught by local teachers who were employed for a period of six weeks during the winter months. These were teachers who had a limited education

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1 J. B. Deyton, "History of Toe River Valley," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1931), p. 42.

2 Ibid., p. 40.



themselves but were able to teach the fundamentals of basic courses in reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic. In many instances the teacher accepted a position upon completion of the first seven grades in school, and often a teacher who was in his late teens or early twenties would enlist students who were older than he. Usually the teachers carried on the occupation of farming or other local work during the remaining months of the year in order to earn a living. The first teachers taught for an average salary of \$16 per month.<sup>3</sup>

Schools were taught in one-roomed buildings made from logs and furnished with hewn-log seats and desks. The classrooms then, as now, were very crowded. It was not uncommon to find a teacher teaching from 60 to 100 students in one school. Supplies and equipment were very scarce and crude. The average student owned a slate and a few books that he was fortunate enough to collect from various sources.<sup>4</sup>

### The First Educational Movement

By the time of the passing of the first half of the century, many settlers of Yancey County had become permanent residents. The Indian problems had been overcome, the

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<sup>3</sup> Teachers Training Class, History and Geography of Yancey County<sup>11</sup> (Burnsville: Teachers Training Class, 1930), p.17.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

wilderness had been pushed farther west, and the people had begun to settle down to some cultural developments. More emphasis was being placed on religion and an education was desirable, if not a necessity, for the masses.

By 1853 the average school term had been extended to two and a half months, and the number of schools taught in the county as reported by Calvin H. Wiley, State Superintendent of Schools, had increased to 22. The following year the same report showed a continued growth in the number of schools, with 33 schools being taught. By 1869 the number had increased to 37 schools with an equal number of licensed teachers. These schools accommodated about one-half the school-age population of the county. However, the length of the school term remained at about two and a half months with the average teacher's salary still \$16 per month.<sup>5</sup>

Before 1850 the person having finished what is now known as the seventh grade was considered to have a good education, but with the increasing number of small schools throughout the county there came a desire on the part of many to continue their education to the secondary level.

The Methodist Church took the first step toward the establishment of a secondary school in the early 1850's. This denomination had become very influential under the

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<sup>5</sup> Deyton, op. cit., p. 40.

leadership of James Anderson and his descendants in the Blue Ridge area. The desire of the church was to continue expanding its influence. The leaders felt that the surest and most logical way to maintain this coveted position, at a time when the demand for education was increasing, was to establish an educational institution. Under these conditions Stevens G. Adams came to Burnsville from his home in Tennessee to establish a Methodist-supported high school. He succeeded in his efforts, and in 1852 the Burnsville Academy was opened.<sup>6</sup>

For many years following its establishment, the Academy existed under very strenuous and often hazardous conditions. Although it was forced to close for two or three years during the War Between the States, it was able to survive many hardships until late in the 1890's.<sup>7</sup>

The founder, Stevens G. Adams, remained head of the school for five years. He was replaced by John A. Ammons, who served until the outbreak of the war. During the first years of the war the school served this section under the leadership of Clayton Bowman, George Wilson, and Don Wilson. During the latter part of the war the demand for men, both at home and on the front, became so great that the school was

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6 Teachers Training Class, loc. cit.

7 Ibid.



forced to close.

The academy was re-opened in 1866 by Meriwether Lewis and served in its original capacity for approximately 30 more years. The exact date that the school was terminated is not known. Records indicate that the school closed sometime during the 1890's.<sup>8</sup>

Although Burnsville Academy was never a chartered institution, it had a wide reputation as being the best academy in Western North Carolina at that time.<sup>9</sup>

Elementary schools continued to increase in number as the population increased and the desire for an education grew. Teachers' salaries increased gradually along with frequent extensions of the school term. Teachers were soon required to pass an examination given by the local superintendent of schools to determine the type of teaching certificate for which they could qualify. Certificates granted were of grades one, two, or three. A local high school, along with more specific teaching requirements, was a great asset to the elementary schools. The quality of teaching was greatly increased, and the interest in schools grew rapidly, as the average citizen realized the value of an education for his children.<sup>10</sup>

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8 Teachers Training Class, op. cit., p. 10.

9 Ibid., p. 17.

10 Ibid., p. 17.

### The Secondary School Movement

The secondary school movement, that had already begun in many sections of the nation, did not begin in Yancey County until near the turn of the twentieth century. Secondary schools and colleges were increasing in number and size throughout the nation. Periodicals and books were circulating into almost every community of the nation in increasing numbers. Improved roads and modes of transportation and communication were not only bringing families and friends closer together, but were making neighbors of states and nations. Yancey County, with its many illiterate adults and limited number of schools, was hardly ready to face the outside world on an equal educational basis. Leaders throughout the county began to realize that better educational facilities were not only desirable, but were an absolute necessity for the coming generations of their people.<sup>11</sup>

The Methodists had already extended their influence through their high school. It was now time for the Presbyterians to take a step forward. They took such a step when they established the Stanley McCormick School in 1899. Stanley McCormick was a modern, efficient high school for a number of years, offering the best in high school education

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<sup>11</sup> Frank Watson, Personal Interview with the Author, Spruce Pine, North Carolina, February 8, 1952.



to its students. There were many outstanding educators who taught in the school, making it a highly reputable school for 23 years. In 1922, with the number of high schools increasing greatly in this area, the school was converted into a trade school for a few years under the name of Carolina New College. Competition from state-supported high schools soon forced the school to close.<sup>12</sup>

The Yancey Collegiate Institute was the next school to be opened on the secondary level.<sup>13</sup> The writer does not deem it necessary to discuss any phase of that school at this point, since the remaining chapters of this work are devoted exclusively to that purpose.

In 1907, there was a private school opened at Bald Creek, a small community about ten miles west of Burnsville. It offered work on the secondary level for a short period. No records of this school are available, but former students honor the school as being efficient and progressive during its existence.<sup>14</sup>

The elementary schools along with the secondary schools, continued to increase in size and efficiency. By 1910 the

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<sup>12</sup> H. G. Bailey, Personal Interview with the author, Burnsville, North Carolina, December 20, 1951.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1901, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Mrs. A. Z. Jamerson, Personal Interview with the author, Burnsville, North Carolina, December 31, 1951.

school term had been extended to five months. Certification remained in the hands of the county superintendent of schools until an act of the state legislature made certification uniform throughout the state in 1917.<sup>15</sup>

In recent years educational progress has paralleled that of most North Carolina counties, with standard requirements being established for all state-supported schools in North Carolina. At present Yancey County has five consolidated schools and one modern elementary school. There is also one small elementary school for Negroes. These schools employ 138 teachers and a supervisor of instruction. During the 1951-52 school term there were 4,350 students enrolled in the schools.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Teachers Training Class, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Yancey County Superintendent of Public Schools, "Statistical Report", 1952.

### CHAPTER III

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

##### Determinative Factors

The increasing interest in public education throughout many sections of the nation in the latter part of the nineteenth century found receptive minds in leading citizens of Yancey County. The denominational rivalry that had existed for many years in this area was revived **during** this period by the idea of denominational schools. The Methodists had greatly expanded their influence through the Burnsville Academy. There was an increasing opportunity for the Presbyterians to establish a similar school. Yet, the Baptist churches in the county had more members than all other denominations combined. In time it became evident that there was increasing need for the establishment of a Baptist school that would serve as an educational institution and at the same time increase the denominational influence on the generations to come.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a Baptist-supported high school in Yancey County was conceived by some local members of the denomination.

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<sup>1</sup> James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951), p. 9.



It soon became a general topic for conversation among, not only the Baptists in the area, but also the many citizens who realized the great need for better educational facilities.<sup>2</sup>

On September 27, 1892, E. F. Watson, a young lawyer, arrived in Burnsville to establish a law practice. He had attended both public and private schools in Glenville, North Carolina, and had just been graduated from the University of North Carolina Law School.<sup>3</sup> This young lawyer was an ardent Baptist who was very much interested in Christian education. He was not long in realizing the need for better secondary education facilities in this area, and he lost no time in using his influence to develop such facilities.<sup>4</sup>

The need for Christian education was magnified by the moral and spiritual conditions throughout the county. In 1892 it was estimated that there were 300 illegal whisky stills operating in the 311 square mile area that made up Yancey County. It was not unusual to see highly intoxicated people attending church services or other public meetings. At almost every public gathering a fight would develop between two or more people. Mob fighting was very common. Murders were committed so frequently that it was unusual for court to convene

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<sup>3</sup> E. F. Watson, Personal Interview with the Author, Spruce Pine, North Carolina, February 9, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> James Hutchins, op. cit. p. 22.

without a murder charge to be tried. Prostitution had become such a social problem that every community was faced with the danger of having its moral standards shattered.<sup>5</sup>

### Preliminary Steps Toward Building A

#### Baptist High School

Under these existing conditions some of the leading ministers and public-minded citizens of the county went to the meeting of the Yancey Baptist Association, which met in the Crabtree church in late August, 1899, with a determination to take steps toward building a high school in the county. The idea was put before the Association, and, after much discussion, the group decided to attempt to build such a school. At this same meeting a board of trustees was appointed "with power to select a site and proceed to the building of an associational high school."<sup>5</sup>

It was the unanimous opinion of this board of trustees and the people represented by them that the school should be opened, first to Baptist students of the county, then, if facilities permitted, students from other counties and other denominations would be accepted.<sup>6</sup> The primary objectives of

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<sup>5</sup> Catalogue of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923-24.

<sup>6</sup> Watson, loc. cit.

of the school would be to offer a secondary education of the highest quality to those who enrolled and to teach the students the value of Christian education in combating the moral and spiritual evils that existed.<sup>7</sup>

There were many obstacles to discourage the building program. The most threatening of these was the lack of funds to finance the school. Although the living standards of the average Yancey County family had been steadily rising for some years, and many families were living fairly comfortable lives from the profits of their respective businesses, very few were able to make adequate contributions toward the building of this school. The churches had almost no available funds for such a program, and it looked as if the school would have to be built upon the faith of those who were so intensely interested in it. So, in spite of the dark outlook, the the board of trustees made immediate plans toward building the school.<sup>8</sup>

#### Board of Trustees

The original board of trustees, elected by the Yancey Baptist Association in 1899, made plans for securing a site and constructing a building for the proposed school. This

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7 Watson, loc. cit.

8 Watson, loc. cit.



TABLE I

THE ORIGINAL BOARD OF TRUSTEED APPOINTED BY  
THE YANCEY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN 1899 TO MAKE PLANS  
AND CONSTRUCT A BUILDING FOR A SCHOOL\*

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B. B. Riddle, Chariman,	Burnsville, N. C.
W. B. Banks, member,	Burnsville, N. C.
J. S. Huskins, member,	Burnsville, N. C.
E. F. Watson, member,	Burnsville, N. C.
J. F. Byrd, member,	Cane River, N. C.
N. N. Silver, member,	Micaville, N. C.
W. H. Sparks, member,	Double Island, N. C.
J. C. Sparks, member,	Green Mountain, N. C.

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\*Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1901., p.2.

board consisted of eight men, all members of the Baptist denomination and residents of Yancey County. Their duties were properly discharged when the first building was completed in 1901. At that time it became necessary to provide for a regular board of trustees to act as a governing body for the institution. In 1901 the Yancey Baptist Association, in session late in August, elected a board of 18 men. This board was divided into three groups of six men each. The first group was elected to serve for a period of one year, the second group for a two-year period, and the third group for a three-year period.<sup>9</sup> After 1901 there was one group of six men elected at each annual session of the association to serve for a period of three years, and one group of six retired from the board at the same time.<sup>10</sup>

Members of the board were elected by the delegates of the Baptist churches. They, like the original board, were to be members of the denomination and residents of the county. Any member was subject to re-election if desired.<sup>11</sup>

#### Aid From The Home Mission Board

In 1898 Dr. A. E. Brown, a man who had distinguished himself as a Christian educator, was elected superintendent

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9 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1901. p. 2.

10 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.

11 Ibid., 1901, 1911.



of the Mountain School Program of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Home Mission Board had already seen the great need for Christian schools in the lower Appalachian Mountain region. It was then Dr. Brown's duty to survey the region and, with the money that was available from the Southern Baptist Convention, help build and support Baptist schools where they were needed most.<sup>12</sup>

In 1900 Dr. Brown came into Yancey County to offer aid and help solicit funds for the school that was about to be built in Burnsville. He, along with some local ministers and other prominent men of the county, spent much time meeting and lecturing to audiences, large or small, that they were able to assemble throughout the county. A small amount of money was contributed by the local people, but the greater part of both the original cost as well as the maintenance expenses was paid by the Home Mission Board.<sup>13</sup>

#### Original School Plant

The location of the school was a question that raised much discussion from the time the first plans were made. The first proposal was that the Crabtree Church donate a small section of its property as a site for the school.

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<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1915.  
p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Hutchins, op. cit., p. 10.

This proposal was rejected by the church soon after it was introduced at the Yancey Baptist Association in 1899.<sup>14</sup> Upon hearing of the proposal and its rejection by the Crabtree Church, Sam Bennett and his wife, Jennie Bennett, announced that they would cheerfully give to the Baptist Association a suitable building site in Burnsville. The Bennett Estate consisted of a large farm on the north side of Burnsville. The Association gratefully accepted this offer without further investigation. The deed, which called for two acres of land for the purpose of building a school and promoting religious work, was signed on March 2, 1900.<sup>15</sup> This tract was an ideal location for the school since it was the geographical center of the county with roads leading to all sections. The location also gave the school the advantage of all available town conveniences offered in Burnsville.

The exact date that the building program began is not known. The first building for the new high school was completed in the summer of 1901. This building was to serve as both the administration and classroom-building. Its total cost was \$4,252.72. This was the only building

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<sup>14</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1901.  
p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Yancey County Office of the Register of Deeds,  
March 21, 1900, Book 24, p. 358.



FIGURE 1, ORIGINAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



that was completed before the school opened.<sup>16</sup>

Realizing that the school would open in the fall of 1901, the local officials and the Home Mission Board began looking for a man to superintend the school. Roswell E. Flack, who had just graduated from Wake Forest College, applied for the position and was accepted. Upon his arrival in Burnsville he was interviewed by Dr. Brown and E. F. Watson. After noting his youthful appearance and detecting a speech defect in the young man, both Brown and Watson tried to persuade him not to accept the position. In reply to their persuasion Flack, being a very determined young man, answered, "I came here to run this school and by the help of God I'm going to run it". Brown and Watson decided that a young man with so much determination should be given an opportunity to prove his capabilities. So Flack became the first principal of the Baptist high school which operated under the name "The Yancey Collegiate Institute."<sup>17</sup>

#### First School Term

The school opened for the first time on September 9, 1901. Three qualified teachers were selected to teach the first school. Flack, previously mentioned, held the degree

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<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1901, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Watson, loc. cit.

Bachelor of Arts from Wake Forest College. He served as principal and taught the high school subjects. Lydia Passmore was the teacher of the intermediate department and music. She held the degree Bachelor of Literature from Oxford Seminary. The teacher for the primary department was Florence McPeters.<sup>18</sup>

The exact number of students enrolled the first year is not recorded. However, the enrollment must have been limited, due to the fact that there were only three teachers and no dormitories available to receive students who lived too far away to walk home each night.

James Hutchins and Joe Letterman were the first two students to enroll in the new school and were the first to graduate from the school in 1906.<sup>19</sup>

Flack's untiring efforts during the first year at Yancey Collegiate Institute proved to his pessimistic patrons that he could launch an educational program successfully. An institution had been born and he had led it through its most critical period. However, he did not remain with the school long enough to reap the harvest of his labors. After the first year the responsibility of promoting the school fell

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<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1901, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Joe Letterman, Personal Interview with the author, Celo, North Carolina, April 12, 1952.

on another man's shoulders.<sup>20</sup>

With the termination of the first school year, the realization of success also reached the minds of the many citizens who had put forth much effort to establish a high school. These people could now offer their children a secondary education that previous generations had not been able to enjoy.

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20 Watson, loc. cit.



## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT OF YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

UNDER E. E. HAWKINS, 1902-1916

The second year of operation of Yancey Collegiate Institute began in the fall of 1902 under the leadership of one of the most noted educators ever employed by the school. E. E. Hawkins, who had been teaching in mountain schools for a number of years and had served as principal of Burnsville Academy at one time, came to lead the school through 14 years of highly successful operation.

Hawkins was a mountaineer by birth, having been born near Mars Hill, North Carolina, where he attended school and became noted as an outstanding young orator. He was graduated from Milligan College in 1895 and immediately began his teaching career. Reputably he was a man with personality and character, whose qualities and determination to do all things with thoroughness made him the ideal man for this position.<sup>1</sup>

#### Building Program

When Hawkins arrived in Burnsville, he learned that the

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<sup>1</sup> James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute. (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951), p. 12.

original building had not been paid for. During the next three years he spent much time in helping solicit funds to liquidate this debt. By 1905 \$3,502.72 had been raised through subscriptions, leaving a deficit of only \$750.<sup>2</sup>

After the first year the school found itself in need of dormitory facilities to take care of those students who had to board near the school but were unable to find adequate facilities in the nearby homes. Steps toward meeting this need were taken in 1905, at which time a gift of \$1,000 was secured from the State Mission Board to be matched by an equal amount of money to be raised locally for the erection of two dormitories. That same year the contract was let for two dormitories at a cost of \$1,300.<sup>3</sup> One of the dormitories was named the Watson Home in honor of the greatest local contributor, E. F. Watson.<sup>4</sup>

Two years later, in 1907, Dr. Brown secured \$5,000 from the State Mission Board to be matched by \$1,5000 locally. This money was used for the construction of the Annie Armstrong Annex to the girls' dormitory.<sup>5</sup>

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2 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1905., p. 12.

3 Ibid., p. 12.

4 James Hutchins, loc. cit.

5 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1907., p. 14.



FIGURE II

WATSON HOME FOR GIRLS AND THE ANNIE ARMSTRONG ANNEX



By 1907 it had become apparent that the State and Home Mission Boards were going to be by far the greatest contributors to the finances of the school. Subsequently, the board of trustees was instructed to make a deed for all the Yancey Collegiate Institute property to the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.<sup>6</sup>

In 1908 the Home Mission Board made another donation of \$2,000 to be used in the construction of another boys' dormitory. The dormitory, built with this fund plus some money that was raised locally, was named the Bennett Home for Boys, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Bennett, who contributed the land for the school.<sup>7</sup>

The total debt of the school in 1910 amounted to \$1,750. A campaign, sponsored by the local citizens to raise money to pay off the debt, was unsuccessful. The following year the Home Mission Board contributed \$500 to be paid on the debt.<sup>8</sup>

In 1914 the Brown Home for Boys was built at a cost of \$4,000, half of which was donated by the Home Mission Board.<sup>9</sup> This dormitory is the only original building of the institution that still stands. It has recently been renovated and is

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6 Ibid., p. 14.

7 James Hutchins, loc. cit.

8 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1911., p. 8.

9 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1914., p. 15.



FIGURE III, BROWN HOME FOR BOYS

being used as a dormitory for students attending the Burnsville School of Fine Arts, sponsored in Burnsville each summer by the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina.

In 1916 a new dormitory for girls, which included a dining room for the student body, was erected. Plans were made at this time to equip the new dormitory and administration building with steam heat at a cost of \$3,000. For this improvement the Home Mission Board contributed \$500.<sup>10</sup>

Many improvements were made and most of the necessary buildings were erected during the fourteen years that Hawkins was in charge of the school. Many of the achievements of the school can be attributed directly to him. Notably, however, he would not lead one to think that he deserved all the credit. He attributed much of the progress that was made to the work of the local ministers and other citizens. Dr. Brown, who remained head of the Mountain School Program of the Southern Baptist Convention, was very influential in securing the many donations that were made by the State and Home Mission Boards.<sup>11</sup>

Other improvements made by men who served the school after Hawkins will be discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

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10 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1916., p. 15.

11 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.



### Financial Problems

Yancey Collegiate Institute never saw the day, from the time the material was purchased for the first building until the entire property was sold in 1925, that it was free from debts. It was thought by the people who originated the idea of a Baptist-supported school in Yancey County that there were enough Baptists and other interested citizens in the county to support the school. However, it was soon realized that many of those who were intensely interested were not financially able to make contributions of sizable amounts, and many who could have given a great deal more became indifferent once the school was established. Most of the burden had to be carried by a few dependable supporters. Had it not been for the gifts of the State and Home Mission Boards, the school would have been forced to close many years before it did.<sup>12</sup>

It is commonly believed that, if any one person deserved more credit than another in sharing the burden of indebtedness of the school during its entire existence, that credit would surely go to E. F. Watson. He was by far the greatest contributor to the school both in money and services rendered. Hawkins, being employed by the school, gave his

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<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1925., p. 10.

full time and support, and the intangible benefits realized by the institution from his services were priceless; but Hawkins had a large family of 13 children to support on the meager income he received. Therefore, he was unable to make much material contribution.<sup>13</sup>

### Enrollment

The increased enrollment from year to year at Yancey Collegiate Institute is evidence that the institution was endeavoring to meet the educational needs in this area. Due to the lack of facilities the enrollment was very limited during the first years, but as the building program progressed the student body increased. From the time the institution opened until the state-supported schools were built, the school enrolled all the students it could accommodate nearly every year.<sup>14</sup>

There are no records available to show the exact number of students enrolled in the school each year for the first three years. However, the total enrollment from 1901 to 1904 was 218, or an average over 72 per year.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hutchins, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1904.  
p. 9.

Most of the students who enrolled during the first four years were local boys who lived within walking distance of the school. There were some students who boarded in private homes near the school, but this practice was expensive and prevented many students from entering the school. This situation was taken care of in 1905 when contracts were awarded for the construction of two new dormitories.<sup>16</sup>

With adequate dormitory facilities and a growing reputation the enrollment jumped to 150 in 1907. In that same year plans were made for more dormitory facilities to take care of the anticipated enrollment for the next two years. In 1909 the enrollment jumped again to 286. In 1910 there was a severe epidemic of measles. As a result, many students who were unable to return to school that fall because of ill health, and others who were kept away by the fear of catching the disease, caused the enrollment to drop to 241 that year.<sup>17</sup>

The enrollment figures from 1911 to 1913 were incomplete because the Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association were published before the enrollment was completed each year. Enrollment figures for 1914 showed an increase over the year 1910 with a total of 256 enrolled.<sup>18</sup>

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16 Ibid., 1905, p. 12.

17 Ibid., 1909, p. 14.

18 Ibid., 1911, p. 8.



Late in the summer of 1916 a very destructive flood swept away many roads and bridges throughout the county, making transportation very difficult. There was also a tremendous damage to the crops throughout the region. This misfortune resulted in another bad year from the standpoint of numbers at Yancey Collegiate Institute. Only 154 students enrolled that fall, the smallest number since 1907.<sup>19</sup>

Other factors hindered the school from having the desired support during the last years that Mr. Hawkins served as principal. In 1913 construction work began on state-supported high schools in five outlying communities in Yancey County. Many parents found it more practical to send their children to these schools, where they could live at home, than to send them to Yancey Collegiate Institute. The war also had its effects, for there was increased employment for the young men of the high school age.<sup>20</sup>

More significant enrollment figures were reached later in the history of the school. These will be discussed in later chapters.

#### Faculty Members

The board of trustees and the administration were

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 1912-1916.

<sup>20</sup> Teachers Training Class, History and Geography of Yancey County, 1930. p. 10.

TABLE II

THE ENROLLMENT OF YANCEY COLLEGIATE  
INSTITUTE, 1901-1924\*

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1901-1904	218
1907	150
1908	300
1909	286
1910	241
1911#	160
1912#	160
1914	256
1915	239
1916	154
1918	250
1919	318
1920#	206
1921	350
1923	287

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# Enrollment was incomplete when the Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association were printed.

\* Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.

very fortunate in the selection of teachers they were able to make. There has probably never been a surplus of well qualified teachers in any school system. Many schools even today must accept teachers with low certificates. The untiring efforts and careful consideration of those who selected new teachers for the school paid great dividends from year to year as the number of teachers increased.<sup>21</sup>

As has been previously stated, the school opened the first year with only three teachers. The number was limited to three until 1905, when an extra teacher was added to the high school staff. In 1909 the increased enrollment made it necessary to add still another teacher to the staff. Five teachers served the school adequately until 1916 when two additional teachers were secured, giving the school a total of seven teachers. Five of the seven held one or more degrees from recognized colleges. The two not holding degrees were teachers of long teaching experience.<sup>22</sup>

Hawkins had the honor of serving the school longer than any other faculty member. His total service amounted to 14 years. A. J. Hutchins has the distinction of being second in length of service. He served the school 10 years.

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<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1925, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1916, p. 15.



TABLE III

## YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

FACULTY, 1901-1917\*

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NAME</u>
1901	Roswell E. Flack Lydia Passmore Florence McPeters	1912	E. E. Hawkins A. J. Hutchins Joanna Farrell Lucy Davis Maude Britt
1904	E. E. Hawkins W. S. Shittle Polly Crowder	1914	E. E. Hawkins A. J. Hutchins Jennie Parker Nancy Patrick Miss Trey
1905	E. E. Hawkins Fred Wilson W. S. Shythe Dovie Hunt	1915	E. E. Hawkins B. L. Moyers Stella Coffey Loretta Stout Pearlie Hunt Mattie Trabeau
1907	E. E. Hawkins Martha Sullinger Bertha Hendricks Minnie Davis	1916	E. E. Hawkins B. L. Moyers Stella Coffey Loretta Stout Pearlie Hunt Elizabeth Brient D. W. White
1909	E. E. Hawkins Ruth Ellison Jonna Farrell Mattie Sykes Gussie Dotson	1917	J. A. Lowery J. W. Huff D. W. White Mrs. J. W. Huff Alice Lambert Loretta Stout Ossie Powder
1910	E. E. Hawkins Florence Dearstyne Ella Churchill Eva McKinney		
1911	E. E. Hawkins Walter B. Hilston Gladys Stevenson Mariam Schell Jessie Brown		

\*Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.

During his term of service he progressed from student to student-teacher (part-time student and part-time teacher), later becoming a full-time teacher and manager of the boys' home.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> James Hutchins, Personal Correspondance of the author., March 18, 1952.

## CHAPTER V

### CURRICULUM, EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ENROLLMENT UNDER E. E. HAWKINS

Yancey Collegiate Institute was handicapped during its early years by its limited number of teachers. With only three teachers at first to teach all the subjects, there was little time left for activities outside the classroom. Probably the greatest need of the school was extra teachers.

It was believed that with more teachers the curriculum could be expanded and the extra-curricular activities program could grow to include such important activities as literary societies, debating teams, and athletics.

Under the conditions that existed in 1902 there seemed to be only one way to make the school grow. Every teacher would have to teach a full schedule of classes and then accept the responsibilities of sponsoring extra-curricular activities after school hours. By doing this, both the curricular and extra-curricular activities could be expanded until the enrollment justified an increase in the teaching staff.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E. F. Watson, Personal Interview with the Author, Spruce Pine, North Carolina, February 8, 1952.



### Curriculum

The establishment and development of a sound curriculum was of foremost importance if Yancey Collegiate Institute were to be recognized by other secondary schools and colleges. This was one of the greatest responsibilities placed upon Mr. Hawkins after he accepted the position.

During the first few years of its existence, the school was limited in the number of courses that could be offered by the small teaching staff. The principal taught the high school subjects, one teacher taught all the intermediate grades, and the other teacher taught all the primary grades. One of the teachers taught music during the limited time that could be borrowed from other duties. In the primary and intermediate departments the regular high school preparatory courses of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and the fundamentals of English grammar were taught. The high school curriculum consisted of courses in spelling, English grammar, general history, Latin, physical geography, advanced arithmetic and algebra, with other courses being squeezed in wherever possible.<sup>2</sup>

The first three years of the school's existence were so successful, and the number of student applications for admission had increased to such an extent that the board of

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<sup>2</sup> James Hutchins, Personal Interview with the Author, Windom, North Carolina, February 8, 1952.

trustees decided to employ an additional teacher for the term beginning in the fall of 1905. Fred Wilson was the teacher chosen to assist Hawkins with the instruction of the high school students. W. S. Shythe was in charge of elementary instruction, and Miss Dovie Hunt came to teach the primary department.<sup>3</sup>

There are no records of the curriculum that was offered during the early years of the school, and the writer of this thesis found only one student who remembered the exact courses he took while enrolled in the school. There was, however, an increasing endeavor to include in the curriculum all courses that would be essential in college preparatory work. That such courses were taught, and taught with thoroughness, is verified by the records made by students who entered college upon graduation from Yancey Collegiate Institute. In 1912 81 per cent of the graduates had gone to college. In that same year six entered Wake Forest College, two entered the University of North Carolina, and two girls entered the Normal School and Industrial College in Greensboro.<sup>4</sup> The educational background of these students is best described by Professor A. H. Patterson, a member of the faculty of the

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<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1912., p. 7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

# University of North Carolina:

Some years ago Dean Stacy and I were working on the records of the students here, and I came across a card bearing the name of the Yancey Collegiate Institute, with the names and records of students from the Institute in the freshman class that year. The thing which attracted my attention was that every one of the students made a good mark on every one of their studies—a thing that rarely happens from any school. I drew Mr. Stacy's attention to it, and asked him whether the Institute was at Yanceyville. His reply was that it was at Burnsville, in the mountains, and that its record that year was the most consistent of any school furnishing boys to the freshman class.<sup>5</sup>

In 1909 the continued increase in enrollment necessitated the addition of a fifth teacher to the school. The increase during this period was largely in the upper intermediate and high school departments.<sup>6</sup>

Yancey Collegiate Institute was one of the first two schools in the South to offer current events. It was also one of the first schools in the South to devote a definite period to the study of newspapers and periodicals. This addition to the curriculum was made early in the life of the school and soon became an important subject taken by almost every high school student.<sup>7</sup>

Greater steps of progress were shown in the fall of

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5 Catalog of the Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1919-20.

6 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1909., p. 10.

7 James Hutchins, Personal Correspondence with the Author, March 18, 1952.



1911 when an extra year was added to the high school course of study. Before that time the school required only three years of work for graduation. It was the conviction of the board of trustees and the faculty that students should be allowed to elect a limited number of courses. The school had grown to the extent that it was possible to offer extra courses at this time. It was also decided that all students attending a Baptist-supported school should take some courses in religious education; therefore Bible and Sunday School courses were added to the curriculum in the fall of 1911.<sup>8</sup>

The following year there came an additional enlargement of the curriculum. The course of study was extended to include more courses in literature, history and mathematics. At the same time plans were made to stress agriculture and civic government. Bible, mission study, and Sunday School work were to receive greater emphasis.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest complete record of the curriculum of the school is found in the catalog for the year 1916-17. The reader will observe, in studying the curriculum as shown in Table I, that the school offered the courses

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p. 8. <sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1911.

p. 7, 8. <sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1912.

TABLE IV

## COURSE OF STUDY

YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, 1916-1917\*

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>FALL TERM</u>	<u>SPRING TERM</u>
Freshman	Ancient History Grammar Latin I Current Events Algebra I	Ancient History Grammar Latin I Current Events Algebra I
Sophomore	Modern History Algebra II Beginners' Rhetoric Latin II Elem. Agriculture Current Events	French History Algebra II Beginners' Rhetoric Latin II Botany Current Events
Junior	English History Algebra III Rhetoric and Literature Latin III Civics Current Events	General Science Political Economy Rhetoric and Literature Latin III Civics Current Events
Senior	English Literature Plane Geometry Latin IV Physics Education Current Events	English Literature Plane Geometry Latin IV Physics Pedagogy Current Events

\*Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1916-1917.

essential in a liberal high school education of that time. Current events was offered both semesters to all high school students. Four years of Latin were required in addition to English, which was taught in every class. Education and Pedagogy were offered to seniors who planned to enter the teaching field. Beginners' Rhetoric was taught as a separate course during the sophomore year and in connection with literature during the junior year.<sup>10</sup>

### Extra-Curricular Activities

The broad curriculum that was offered at Yancey Collegiate Institute must have kept most students well occupied during the school day. All students were required to take at least five courses each term, and there was a supervised study hall maintained at all times for those students who were not engaged in classroom activities. Extra-curricular activities were carried on after school hours and on Saturdays. Such a schedule tended to boost the activities program rather than hinder it, because most students were boarding students. Most of those who did not board at the school lived near enough so that they were able to remain after school in order to participate in the

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<sup>10</sup> Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1916-1917.



activities in which they were interested. It was never a policy of the school to let outside activities interfere with the regular scheduled classes.<sup>11</sup>

Literary Societies. Literary societies were organized in the school at an early date. The exact date is indefinite, but two societies for boys were organized soon after Mr. Hawkins became head of the school. They were the Philomathesian and Engelian Societies. Later the Euthesian and Diolection Societies for boys were organized. There were only two societies for girls. The Hypathian was first to be organized. It was later divided into two societies which were named the Huffonian, and the Englian.<sup>12</sup>

Society meetings were held each Friday night during the regular school term. The programs consisted of debates, essays, declamations, discussions and reports on current events, original stories and music.<sup>13</sup>

Debating was the most popular activity in all the societies. Questions of interest that were covered by the newspapers were frequently debated. In 1923 the annual debate between the Euthesian and Dialectic societies was: "Resolved, That the Allied War Debt should be cancelled."

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11 James S. Byrd, Personal Interview with the Author, Day Book, North Carolina, May 1, 1952.

12 Hutchins, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

13 Yearbook of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923.

The judges decision was in favor of the negative team composed of Ray Bennett and Nathan Yelton, versus Joe Murphy and Lenoir Honeycutt on the positive team.<sup>14</sup> Occasionally a humorous subject was debated. One subject for discussion of this type was: "Resolved, that John Henry Morton is more handsome than Maxton Hamilton." Both names were fictitious.<sup>15</sup>

It was not a requirement that every student be a member of a society, but it was expected that all boys over 14 years of age join. Societies were considered an essential part of the extra-curricular activities program because they trained the student to express his ideas publicly with greater ease and better poise, and they created an excellent school spirit.<sup>16</sup>

Debating Teams. Debating was not limited to the society programs. Yancey Collegiate Institute existed in the days when oratorical ability was considered essential for success in many professional fields; therefore debating teams were organized and participated in with much enthusiasm. Two outstanding debating teams were the Triangular Debators and the Annual Debators.<sup>17</sup> These teams frequently were formed

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14 Hutchins, op. cit., p. 35.

15 Hutchins, op. cit., p. 35.

16 Ibid., p. 34.

17 Yearbook of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923.

in the literary societies and were closely affiliated with them. They usually met on Friday nights but often debated in chapel programs and other special programs. Teams were usually limited to six or eight of the best orators that could be enlisted. Some inter-school debating was carried on, but the highlight of the debating calendar was the annual debate between the two organizations, which was usually held in February.<sup>18</sup>

Religious Activities. It was expected from the beginning that all students who enrolled at the Baptist school would participate in the religious activities of the campus. All students were required to attend Sunday School each Sunday and church services as often as possible. In addition to these services, chapel was made a daily requirement for all students. The chapel programs usually consisted of reading of the Scripture, prayer, the singing of patriotic or sacred songs, and announcements. The program was often concluded with a brief lecture by one of the teachers or occasionally by a visiting speaker. On those days when speakers were not available, it was a common practice for Hawkins to call on each student to stand and recite his favorite Bible verse.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> James Hutchins, Personal Interview with the Author, Windom, North Carolina, February 8, 1952.

<sup>19</sup> James S. Byrd, loc. cit.



The School Paper. The school paper, called "The Y. C. I. Student", was published on a bi-weekly basis. The printing of the paper was done in the local print shop on the campus. The paper staff consisted of a faculty member as advisor, a student as editor-in-chief, with other students serving as assistant editors, general managers, local editors, sports writers, and business managers. These were elected by the student body at the beginning of each year to serve for one year.

The school paper consisted of four pages of stories, announcements, articles written by the faculty, jokes, and advertisements. The December 10, 1912 edition carried a full-page editorial on "Lawlessness" by E. E. Hawkins, an article entitled "Good Roads" by A. J. Hutchins, a brief article on "The Powers of Thought" by Chloe Wilson, and local news and advertisements.

The paper was sold to students, alumni, partons, and other interested persons. The rates were 50 cents a year or 30 cents a semester.<sup>20</sup>

Physical Education Activities. The athletic program participated in by most of the student body was divided into

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<sup>20</sup> A copy of the December 10, 1912 paper was secured by the writer from his father who was a student of the school at the time the paper was published. It is the only copy in existence that the writer was able to learn about.

three parts. There were organized sports for boys that were coached by a member of the faculty, organized sports for girls that were coached by a woman on the teaching staff, and the uncoached games that were usually played by younger boys and girls.

The most popular sports for boys were basketball and baseball. Both sports were played on an inter-school basis. Since there were only a limited number of schools within a day's journey of the school, the teams often played some of the organized independent teams throughout the county. There are no available records of the actual games that were played, but physical fitness and sportsmanship were always emphasized in the athletic program.<sup>21</sup> Football was considered by the administration before 1923 to be too rough for high school boys. The school did not develop a team before that time. Plans were made in 1923 for a football team. Equipment was purchased, and a field was graded for that purpose. No records have been found showing the outcome of the team.<sup>22</sup>

Organized sports for girls consisted of tennis and basketball. Both sports were coached by a woman on the teaching staff.<sup>23</sup> These teams may have played teams from

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21 James Hutchins, op. cit., p. 34-45.

22 Yearbook of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923.

23 James Hutchins, loc. cit.

other nearby schools, but there are no records to verify this assumption.

There were many unorganized games played by the smaller boys and girls. Aunt-ne-over was one of the favorites. This game was played by the two teams taking positions on opposite sides of a building. A large softball was used. The ball would be thrown across the building and the thrower would yell, "aunt-ne-over". The one who caught the ball ran then to the other side of the building and tagged as many members of the opposing team as he could. The opposite side surrendered those who were tagged and they became members of the other team. The opposite side then threw the ball and the same procedure was used until one team won all the members of the opposite team.<sup>24</sup>

Bullpen was another favorite. This was played in much the same manner that dodge ball is played today. The participants gathered inside the baseball diamond. There was one player on each base who threw the ball at those within the diamond. If he hit one of the players, he remained on base; but if he threw and missed, he exchanged places with the one thrown at.<sup>25</sup>

Tag, running base, boxing, wrestling, and other such

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



games were played from time to time by various groups.<sup>26</sup>

### Discipline

Most of the students at Yancey Collegiate Institute came from homes having a religious environment. Nearly every student realized the value of the opportunity that was his, and as a result, was very earnest in his work. Such students found it easy to adjust themselves to the strict requirements of the school. Discipline problems of a serious nature were almost unheard of on the campus. The usual petty offences were committed, however, and had to be reckoned with.<sup>27</sup>

There were three types of punishment commonly used. Corporal punishment was used whenever necessary for the younger boys. The girls who disobeyed rules were usually given extra work to do. The work generally consisted of sweeping classrooms, helping clean some of the dormitories, or assisting the cooks. The type and extent of work assigned depended on the nature of the offense and the attitude of the girl in discharging her extra duties. For the older boys there was a more severe punishment. There were some large oak stumps scattered over the campus that had not been removed when the timber was cut to build the school. When a boy

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

committed an offense of a relatively serious nature, it was a common practice to assign him to the task of grubbing a stump. His extra duties began after school, and he usually had a limited time in which to complete the task. If the work was not done within the specified time, he was given an extra stump.<sup>28</sup>

Stump grubbing was a difficult task, and every boy dreaded it. If such an assignment were made, however, the offender usually accepted his punishment in good spirits, while other boys joked with him. Many times other fellows would come to his aid, when they thought they could do so without being caught, and the job would be completed in a short time.<sup>29</sup>

Student government was almost unheard of as a school activity in the days of Yancey Collegiate Institute. Its value had not been realized in this section as a promoter of democratic principles, and the faculty and matrons of

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28 Ibid.

29 The writer recalls an instance as told by his father, who was a student of the school at one time, in which a boy was assigned a stump to be grubbed over the weekend. This particular stump was the largest one on the campus and would have required hours of work. The offender and his friend, who thought Mr. Hawkins was out of town at the time, decided to blast the stump with dynamite. About the time they were ready to light the fuse they looked around and found that Mr. Hawkins had been standing nearby all the time to catch them in their scheme. The result was an extra assignment for both boys.

the dormitories rarely saw the time when they needed the assistance of the student body in disciplining students.<sup>30</sup>

### Lyceum Programs and Commencement Exercises

Lyceum programs were considered to be important elements in the development of well-rounded students at Yancey Collegiate Institute. An activity schedule made up of local talent and outside attractions was planned each session. These were actively supported by the citizens of the town as well as the school.<sup>31</sup>

The best entertainment available was brought to the school through the lyceum numbers. This included numbers by outstanding violinists, pianists, vocalists, and group performances. One program was presented by the Swiss Bell Ringers.<sup>32</sup>

The lyceum numbers came under the direction of the Piedmont Lyceum Bureau, of Asheville, North Carolina, during the latter years.<sup>33</sup> Before that time they were sponsored by a lyceum bureau in Atlanta, Georgia. The school tried to

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30 James Hutchins, op. cit., p. 36.

31 Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923-24.

32 Mrs. C. R. Hamrick, Personal Interview with the Author, June 28, 1952.

33 Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1924-25.



offer from four to six performances each year.<sup>34</sup>

The commencement exercise was an activity of the school that drew people from long distances. It was probably the most popular of all the activities offered by the school. In those days entertainment in the rural communities was very limited, and people would travel long distances to hear an address by an outstanding person. The school was fortunate in having some very notable people to deliver graduation addresses. In 1902 the address was made by North Carolina's great educational governor, Charles B. Aycock. A few years later Locke Craig, who later became governor of North Carolina, was the guest speaker. In 1909 Judge J. C. Pritchard who had served a number of years as United States Senator, made the literary address. Dr. William Louis Poteat was the guest speaker at one time. He later became president of Wake Forest College.<sup>35</sup>

#### College Rating of Graduates

The curriculum offered by Yancey Collegiate Institute was planned primarily for those people who were interested in going to college. Vocational courses were never greatly emphasized by the administration. The limited number of

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<sup>34</sup> Mrs. C. R. Hamrick, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> James Hutchins, op. cit., p. 37.

courses that were offered outside the academic field were offered as courses only to be elected by the students. The administration encouraged all its students to continue their education on the college level, and it consistently endeavored to prepare each student for college work.

The school's record of students entering colleges is outstanding. As early as 1906 graduates began entering college. Two students from the class entered college that year. By 1912 eighty-one per cent of the graduates of the institution had entered college.<sup>36</sup> As late as 1923 eighty per cent of the graduates had gone to college.<sup>37</sup>

Since Yancey Collegiate Institute was a Baptist-supported institution serving a predominately Baptist population, it was expected that the majority of the graduates would attend one of the Baptist colleges after graduation from high school. Three of these institutions, Wake Forest College, Furman University, and Carson-Newman College, offered scholarships to those students who were recommended by the administration of Yancey Collegiate Institute.<sup>38</sup>

Evidence of the superior training given at this

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<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1912., p. 7, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Yearbook of the Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923.

<sup>38</sup> Catalog of the Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923-24.

institution and of their success in college is verified by testimony of Professor H. A. Jones of Wake Forest College:

The boys who come from Yancey Collegiate Institute to Wake Forest have given evidence of training superior to that of any other High School in the state. Your boys are the very best. They are on the right side of moral questions. If you have any more like them send them down.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Hutchins, op. cit., p. 38.



## CHAPTER VI

### YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE FROM 1916-1920

The curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and the general policies of Yancey Collegiate Institute remained practically unchanged from 1916 until the closing of the school ten years later.<sup>1</sup> This fact does not mean, however, that all progress stopped or that the school did not continue to grow during the next ten years. Some outstanding school men came to operate the school during this period. They were men who proved their abilities in later years by the outstanding work they did both at Yancey Collegiate Institute and at other institutions.<sup>2</sup>

During the period from 1916 to 1920 the school was headed by two men, each serving as principal of the school for two years.<sup>3</sup> The work of these two men will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

#### The Administration of J. A. Lowery

Hawkins' immediate successor at Yancey Collegiate

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1 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.

2 James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951), p. 16.

3 Ibid.

Institute was Dr. J. A. Lowery. Very little is recorded about the work of Dr. Lowery, either before he came to Yancey Collegiate Institute or after he left it. He was a Baptist minister, having earned the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Divinity before coming to Burnsville. His first term as principal began in the fall of 1916. He served in this capacity for only two years.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Lowery had only two teachers on his first staff that had had previous experience at Yancey Collegiate Institute. In addition to these, four other well qualified teachers were employed. They were J. W. Huff, a graduate of Furman University; Mrs. J. W. Huff, from Winthrop College; Alice Lambert, from Meredith College; and Ossie Powder.<sup>5</sup>

The enrollment, which was hardly complete when the Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association were printed, showed only 154 students enrolling in the school. This meant that the school would operate under a greater deficit or would release some of its teachers until the enrollment increased. The administration chose to retain its present faculty and hope for more students the following year.<sup>6</sup>

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4 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1917., p. 17.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

There were two reasons for the reduced enrollment during Lowery's administration of the school. The war effort was offering increased employment to many of the older boys in high school, and some were forced to remain at home and take over the work that their fathers or older brothers had done before going into the army. The other reason, and by far the greater one, was the completion of five high schools in other sections of the county. These schools received their support from state and local government revenues and offered to the students in the communities in which they were located a high school education that was much cheaper than that offered by Yancey Collegiate Institute.<sup>7</sup>

The reputation that had been made by the school is exemplified by the large area represented in the enrollment of 1916-1917. That year the student body consisted of students from North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Virginia.<sup>8</sup>

Although the student body was greatly reduced in 1916-1917, the curriculum remained broad enough to offer almost any course desired by the students enrolled. Table II on page 53 gives the complete curriculum for that year.

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<sup>7</sup> Teachers Training Class, History and Geography of Yancey County (Burnsville: 1930), p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1917.  
p. 15.



It will be noticed that, in addition to the core subjects, such subjects as beginners' rhetorics, pedagogy, agriculture, political economy, and education had been added. The type of curriculum offered appealed to any student who planned to go to college, enter business, or secure a temporary teacher's certificate and begin teaching.<sup>9</sup>

E. R. Harriss Succeeds Dr. Lowery

Dr. Lowery passed his duties to the school on to E. R. Harris in the fall of 1918. For undetermined reasons, it seems that Harris enjoyed a more successful administration than his predecessor had been able to enjoy. The war was still in progress, there was still a shortage of man power and a new state-supported school had been built in Burnsville. It seemed logical that these conditions would critically reduce the enrollment of the school; nevertheless the board of trustees gave Harris an increase in teacher allotment during his first year, making a total of ten teachers. This was the largest number of teachers yet to be employed by the school. Strangely enough, the enrollment that year increased to 250 students.<sup>10</sup>

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9 Ibid.

10 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1919.,  
p. 10,11.

At least three courses were added to the curriculum during the two years that Harris headed the school. These were courses in sociology, French, and home economics. In addition to these there was a course offered in shorthand and typewriting. The following courses were offered in Bible:<sup>11</sup>

Old Testament History  
 New Normal Manual  
 New Testament History  
 Doctorines of Our Faith  
 Winning to Christ  
 The Graded Sunday School  
 Seven Laws of Teaching  
 Home and Foreign Missions  
 Adult Bible Classes

One of the greatest tragedies of the entire school occurred on November 11, 1918. A fire of undetermined origin swept through the walls of the original pebble-dashed building, which was used for all administrative purposes and contained most of the classrooms. All records were burned, and the adequately equipped library was entirely consumed by the fire.<sup>12</sup>

However, one of the most impressive facts about the school was that classwork was never greatly hindered because of misfortune. The day following the fire, the Bennett Home

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<sup>11</sup> Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1918-19.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1919.  
 p. 10, 11.



FIGURE IV, SECOND ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



was modified into classrooms and classes continued as usual until a new administration building could be built.<sup>13</sup>

In 1919 a new administration building was built. The construction was of brick at a cost of \$43,000. It was one of the most modern buildings in Western North Carolina. The new building was a great improvement over the first building, both in workmanship and efficiency. It contained twelve classrooms, two society halls, two music studios, a study hall, and a large auditorium, all modernly equipped with steam heat and electric lights.<sup>14</sup>

The enrollment during the last year of Harris' administration reached a new height. During the school year of 1919-20 there were 318 students enrolled in the school.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hutchins, op. cit., p. 8-12.

<sup>14</sup> Yearbook of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923., p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1920., p. 17, 18.

## CHAPTER VII

### PROGRESS OF YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE UNDER LEADERSHIP OF ISAAC N. CARR, 1920-1923

Isaac N. Carr came to Burnsville in the summer of 1920 to accept the leadership of Yancey Collegiate Institute. He remained in this capacity for three years. During this time some notable accomplishments were made by the institution. This chapter will discuss some of the accomplishments made by the school under Carr's leadership.

#### Enrollment Increased

The enrollment of the school, coming out of a slump in 1917, continued to increase year by year through the school term of 1921-1922. In that year all enrollment records were broken.<sup>1</sup> In 1920 there were 206 students enrolled when the Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association were printed. Students were enrolled after this date, however. In 1921 the enrollment was stopped at 350. This was the first time in the entire history of the school that more students made application than could be accommodated by the school.<sup>2</sup> All

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1 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.

2 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1921,  
p. 19.

available dormitory space was filled to capacity.

### College Work Offered

The optimistic patrons of the school took great pride in the successful operation of the school following the First World War. By 1921 it looked as if the school was going to grow beyond the dreams of its many patrons. Some members of the board of trustees began to dream of a junior college in Burnsville to accommodate the many students who were going away to college. With the hope that their dreams might soon become a reality, the board of trustees decided that the school should offer a fifth year of high school work that would be equal to the first year of college work. These plans were completed, and in the fall of 1921 the school offered to its previous graduates a fifth year of work. This work consisted of courses in English, solid geometry, plane trigonometry, history, education, Latin and Bible. There were also limited courses offered in shorthand, type-writing, and bookkeeping.<sup>3</sup>

The following year the school reached the greatest scholastic goal of its history. In 1922 it was awarded membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. This made its graduates acceptable by almost

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<sup>3</sup> Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1921-1922.



any college they chose to enter. It also enabled those who had completed the fifth year of high school work to enter college as a sophomore in most colleges.<sup>4</sup>

Administration Building After  
Second Burning

By 1921 the total value of the school property had grown to \$90,000. This valuation was reduced, however, in the winter of 1921-1922, when Carr shared the misfortune of Harris in having a destructive fire. The new administration building that had been completed less than two years was burned again. The exact date of the fire is indefinite, since there are no records available, but it did take place on a cold winter night when there was a snow on the ground.<sup>5</sup>

The cause of the fire is also indefinite. It originated in the library and was discovered at an early stage, but due to the lack of fire-fighting equipment the fire spread throughout the building, destroying the library, records, and most of the furniture. Two boys, who had been accepted as students after having served terms in a boys' reform school in Asheville, were accused of setting the fire. A suit was brought against

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<sup>4</sup> James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951) p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> E. B. Bailey, Personal Interview with the Author, Toledo, North Carolina, May 19, 1952.

TABLE V  
COURSES OF STUDY\*  
1921-1922

	<u>FALL TERM</u>	<u>SPRING TERM</u>
FIRST YEAR	English I Math I Latin I Spanish I Bible I	English I Math I Latin I Spanish I Bible I
SECOND YEAR	English II Math II Latin II Spanish II Science or History	English II Math II Latin II Spanish II Science or History
THIRD YEAR	English III Math III Latin or French History or Science Home Economics or Manual Training	English III Math III Latin or French History or Science Home Economics or Manual Training
FOURTH YEAR	English IV Science IV Latin or French History IV Civics	English IV Science IV Latin or French History IV Civics
FIFTH YEAR (COLLEGIATE)	English V Math V History V Latin V Bible V Education V Shorthand Typewriting Bookkeeping	English V Math V History V Latin V Bible V Education V Shorthand Typewriting Bookkeeping

\*Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1921-22., p. 8.

both boys, and they were tried in the local court. The plaintiff was unable to produce sufficient evidence, so both boys were released.<sup>6</sup>

The building was not completely destroyed by fire the second time. In rebuilding the plant the brick walls, the lower floor, and the foundation of the burned building were used. This left only the partitions, roof, and windows to be replaced completely.<sup>7</sup> The exact cost of rebuilding the structure is unknown, but it seems logical to believe that it was done at a cost considerably less than that of the original building.

### First Yearbook

One of the accomplishments of the school during Mr. Carr's term of service was the publishing of a yearbook. This project was complete in every detail. It carried individual pictures of all high school students, group pictures of all the organizations of the school, and some snapshots taken at random. The class history of each grade was given along with the prophecy of the senior class. The book contained 85 pages of pictures written reports and advertisements. One of the advertisements carries a descrip-

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<sup>6</sup> John Bennett, Personal Interview with the author, June 28, 1952.

<sup>7</sup> E. B. Bailey, loc. cit.



tion of the school. The reader will have a greater appreciation of the school after reading the advertisement as follows:<sup>8</sup>

Established 1901  
Co-educational

A Preparatory School  
Altitude 2840 feet

YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE  
Burnsville, N. C.

Motto: Do What You Do.

A Christian school with a reputation for thoroughness, located in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Eighty per cent of our graduates have attended college. Graduates are admitted to any college or university in the South. Last session five states were represented in the student body.

An accredited high school with college trained teachers. Laboratory instruction given with the sciences. Special courses in Bible, Home Economics, Physical Education, Manual Training, Art, Expression, Piano, Voice, and Violin. No extra tuition for Bible, Physical Instruction, Home Economics, and Manual Training if student is taking regular Literary Course. Library contains 1,300 volumes with 20 current magazines and daily newspapers. New Administration Building modernly equipped throughout containing 12 classrooms, two society halls, two music studios, a study hall, and a gymnasium. All buildings equipped with steam heat, electric lights, and running water. Successful teams in baseball, basketball, and debating.

Expenses including literary tuition, fees, board, room rent, lights and fuel, for session of nine months, \$135. Fall term opened August 22.

For further information address:

I. N. Carr, President  
Burnsville, N. C.

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<sup>8</sup> Yearbook of the Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923, p. 88.

### Endowment Fund

Yancey Collegiate Institute was established primarily to serve the educational needs of Yancey and surrounding counties. It was the intention of those who made the original plans for the school that it would operate in such a manner as to make it possible for all students to attend the school at a minimum of expense. Expenses were kept at a minimum and most parents were able to send their children to school without suffering from lack of money. There were a few families, however, who were financially unable to pay the required fees.

As early as 1912 some of the progressive-minded citizens decided that some provision should be made for those who wished to attend school but were unable to pay their expenses. Various provisions were discussed when the Yancey Baptist Association met in the fall of 1915, and the following resolution was made and adopted:

Resolved 1. That this Association undertake the raising of an endowment fund for the Yancey Collegiate Institute. And for this purpose it is requested that each church within this Association, at least once in each year take a collection for this fund and that at the 11 o'clock service on Friday of each session of this body a public collection for this purpose shall be taken.

Resolved 2. That this endowment fund shall in no way be dissipated or spent and only the interest thereon shall ever be available or spent for any cause. That the fund shall be loaned by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees and under the direction of said Board and the interest compounded annually and no part of the interest shall be

available until said sum including the principal and interest shall have reached the amount of \$5,000.00, when only the interest shall be available.

Resolved 3. That this resolution shall be kept in the minutes of this Association perpetually as a continual reminder to all the Churches.

Resolved 4. That the moderator appoint a Standing Committee of five members to be known as the endowment committee whose duty it shall be to collect funds for the endowment and which committee shall report to this body annually.<sup>9</sup>

The moderator appointed the following members to serve on the endowment committee: Rev. D. W. White, W. G. Whisnant, Prof. E. E. Hawkins, E. F. Watson, Prof. E. J. Angel.<sup>10</sup>

The response of the churches to this resolution was not very encouraging for the first years. By 1921 the endowment fund amounted to \$225.16.<sup>11</sup>

By 1923 the fund had reached \$372.07, an amount large enough to help some students go to school who could not afford to pay all their expenses.<sup>12</sup>

No figures are given concerning the number of students to take advantage of the endowment fund during the years it was made available. But regardless of the success of the fund

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9 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1915., p. 17.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid. 1921., p. 13.

12 Ibid. 1923., p. 19.



at Yancey Collegiate Institute, it was not allowed to die with the school. Instead it was transferred to Mars Hill College as an endowment fund available only to Yancey County students entering that institution. At the present time the fund has increased to the sum of over \$34,000.<sup>13</sup>

### Financial Problems

In spite of the inspiration that resulted from the increased enrollment during the early twenties, and the broad curriculum that was developed, the board of trustees was never relieved from the depressed feeling that the school's financial condition was becoming more critical each year. The Southern Baptist Convention had been very generous in offering financial aid as it was needed by the school. It had invested considerably more money in the school than the citizens of the county had been able to raise. It looked, however, as if the responsibility of financing the institution would become more of a community problem year after year because the Home Mission Board began discontinuing a number of its schools where state-supported schools were offering serious competition. Yancey Collegiate Institute had been faced with such competition since other schools were built

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<sup>13</sup> C. B. Trammell, Personal Interview with the Author, Burnsville, North Carolina., June 5, 1952.

in the county, and especially since the state-supported high school was built in Burnsville in 1917.<sup>14</sup>

In 1917 the total indebtedness of the institution was approximately \$4,000, a relatively small debt in comparison to the total value of the school property. By 1921 the debt had grown to \$17,000.<sup>15</sup> This debt was greatly increased by the burning of the administration building in the winter of 1921-1922.<sup>16</sup> It looked as if the school might be forced to close because of its financial obligations. Nevertheless, the school administrators continued to promote the best school possible and left the financial worries largely to the board of trustees.

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<sup>14</sup> Teachers Training Class, History and Geography of Yancey County (Burnsville: 1930), p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1921.  
p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 1923, p. 19.

## CHAPTER VIII

### YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE DURING ITS LAST THREE YEARS, 1923-1926

Yancey Collegiate Institute reached the height of its success during the three years that Carr served as principal. During the years of 1921-1922 the school enrolled the largest number of students in its history. The teaching staff was also the largest in history, and the curriculum included more courses than it had included at any one time before; nevertheless, during Carr's last year with the school, he saw a downward trend in the enrollment, teaching staff and curriculum. Although it may not have been evident at that time, the school was destined to close for two primary reasons. First, the state-supported high schools were offering too much competition for the Baptist school. Second, the indebtedness of the school could not be paid off.

Carr left the school in the spring of 1923. He was succeeded by Roy M. Lee. Lee was a young man who had received his degree from Wake Forest College after having served in the army during the World War. Before coming to Burnsville he had had only one year's experience in the teaching field. He had taught Bible and science and had coached athletics at Boiling Springs Academy the previous year. Although the school was soon to close, it became Lee's responsibility to promote the



best school that was possible under the conditions that existed at that time.<sup>1</sup>

### High Standards Maintained To The End

The enrollment of the school dropped to 287 during the term beginning in 1923.<sup>2</sup> The enrollment the previous year had forced the board of trustees to release two of the teachers, leaving Lee only nine teachers during his first year with the school.<sup>3</sup> This meant that the teachers would have to accept extra responsibilities if the broad curriculum were to be maintained.

Whether or not courses were dropped from the curriculum during these last three years the writer was unable to determine. There were courses offered as electives during these years in home economics, art, expression, manual training, physical education, music and Bible.<sup>4</sup> Sufficient courses were offered in education so that a student desiring to teach school could obtain an Elementary "B" certificate upon the completion of a six-weeks course in teachers' training after

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1 James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951), p. 20.

2 Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, 1923, p. 23.

3 Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923-24.

4 Minutes, op. cit., 1925, p. 10.

he had received his diploma from Yancey Collegiate Institute.<sup>5</sup>

The wide reputation of the school brought students from many communities during the last years of the school. In 1923 the student body was represented by at least five states. Students were enrolled from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. At least ten counties from Durham to Cherokee were represented.<sup>6</sup>

The enrollment figures for the last two years are not available. The number of teachers employed indicate that there was a reduction of the enrollment, especially during the last year. Ten teachers were employed for the year 1924-1925, the same as the previous year.<sup>7</sup> During 1925-1926, however, there were two more teachers released, leaving a total of eight to teach the last school.<sup>8</sup>

Only the best qualified teachers available were employed to the end. During the last year six of the eight teachers were college graduates. The two not holding degrees were teachers who had proved their ability through years of satisfactory teaching experience. The board of trustees considered the teaching staff during the last year to be the

<sup>5</sup> Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1923-1924.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes, op. cit., 1925, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Catalog of Yancey Collegiate Institute, 1924-1925.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes, op. cit., 1925, p. 10.

best the school had ever employed.<sup>9</sup>

### Competition From Other Schools

When Yancey Collegiate Institute was opened there was not a single state-supported school in Yancey County. By the end of World War I there were five such schools located in outlying communities of the county. At first these schools offered very little competition to the Baptist-supported school, because they were small and could not offer the broad curriculum that Yancey Collegiate Institute was offering. By the time Lee came to Burnsville, the schools had developed to the point that they were offering much greater competition. They had grown large enough to employ a sufficient number of teachers to teach the courses that most students desired to take, and their extra-curricular activities program was expanding rapidly.<sup>10</sup>

Parents who once considered Yancey Collegiate Institute to be the best school in western North Carolina and the only school their children should attend were beginning to realize the practicality of the state-supported schools. These schools were less expensive, and most parents wanted to keep

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9 Ibid.

10 James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951), p. 38.



their children at home. Attending state schools was much cheaper than having them board in Burnsville in order to attend Yancey Collegiate Institute.<sup>11</sup>

### Financial Obligations

The building debt that had accumulated prior to Lee's administration has been discussed in the preceding chapters. In addition to this debt, it became more difficult each year for the school to meet its administrative expenses. Many of the strong supporters of the school had lost interest when other schools were built in the county. Local contributions, which were never adequate, decreased at a time when an increase was greatly needed. Many people had the opinion that the Home and State Mission Boards would continue to make great contributions to the school, and that their help was no longer needed.<sup>12</sup>

When Yancey Collegiate Institute first opened, the teachers' salaries were relatively small problems. E. E. Hawkins began as principal of the school in 1902 on a salary of \$40 per month. In 1916 he received only \$100 per month. By the time Lee was made principal wages and salaries had increased so that he was paid \$1,400 during his first year

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11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

and was given an increase of \$400 during his last year. The teachers' salaries increased proportionately during this period.<sup>13</sup>

The mission boards realized the seriousness of the denominational school problem soon after the state-supported school building program was launched. They did not believe that the denominational school could compete with these schools, and they were unwilling to spend great sums of money for permanent improvements in their schools, which would soon be forced to close. As a result, very little financial aid was given to Yancey Collegiate Institute after 1920.<sup>14</sup> This left the school facing a big debt and an ever-increasing amount of operating expense with a very inadequate source of income.

#### Termination of the School, 1926

Upon reaching the conclusion in 1925 that the school could no longer operate because of its deficit, the board of trustees began making plans for the disposal of the property. The Southern Baptist Convention had secured a deed for the property in 1907, but the board of trustees retained the

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<sup>13</sup> Minutes, loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes of the Yancey Baptist Association, passim.

governing power.<sup>15</sup> In selling the property the board had to meet the provisions of the deed made by Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Bennett, which stated that the property must always be used for religious or educational purposes.<sup>16</sup> In order to do this they had only one alternative. The board could sell the property to the Yancey County Board of Education and they could convert the school into a state-supported school. This move was made in the summer of 1925 and the entire school property, which was worth over \$105,000, was sold to the county board of education for \$65,000. The county board agreed for Yancey Collegiate Institute to continue to operate during the school term of 1925-26. At the close of the term in 1926 the county board took possession.<sup>17</sup>

The following report, which was made by the board of trustees to the Yancey Baptist Association in the fall of 1925, sums up some of the great achievements of the school and explains why the decision was made to close it.

The Yancey Collegiate Institute was organized and the first term of school began in August, 1901. The sacrifices made by our people for the building of this Institution and for its maintenance have been prodigious. It is with deepest regret that we have to report that within the last few years the interest in the Institution has been waning. When this Institution was first organized there was not a High School in the County of

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15 Minutes, op. cit., 1925., p. 11.

16 Yancey County Register of Deeds' Office, Burnsville, March 1900, Book 24, p. 358.

17 Ibid.



Yancey. Now there are five. If this school is to cease forever, it has been entirely worth the cost. We have sent out into the world noble, God fearing men and women to enrich it. We have created in the County of Yancey an educational atmosphere and we verily believe that Yancey Collegiate Institute has been responsible for the High Schools which now exist in our county. We do not believe that these High Schools can possibly do the work that the Yancey Collegiate Institute has been doing. Our people have not been as loyal to the school as they ought to have been, and a hardship has been cast upon the Board of Trustees in the way of meeting deficits in the payment of teachers salaries and other expenses, that could hardly be borne.

This school plant has been sold to the Board of Education of Yancey County, and they the said Board will take charge of this property after June first, 1926. This property is worth more than \$105,000 and we are selling it to the Board of Education for \$65,000. . . .<sup>18</sup>

The school closed in the spring of 1926 after serving many of the educational needs of its people for a quarter of a century. It had not succeeded in all its attempts, but those who knew the school know that it rendered a great service to the people of western North Carolina, especially to those of Yancey County.<sup>19</sup>

Burnsville High School began operating in the fall of 1926 using the campus and buildings that had been built by Yancey Collegiate Institute. The administration building is still being used for classrooms for the elementary school in Burnsville.

The high school plants that were built throughout the

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<sup>18</sup> Minutes, loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

county before World War I served their purpose and were replaced by larger high school buildings, constructed by the Workman's Progress Association under the New Deal Policy.

Overcrowded conditions have forced the present school administration to plan a larger building program for the future. The plan being formulated at the present time is to build a large high school building on the original Yancey Collegiate Institute property, and consolidate the five county high schools.<sup>20</sup>

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20 Yancey County Board of Education Office.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONTRIBUTIONS OF YANCEY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

The most important events that took place during the history of Yancey Collegiate Institute have been discussed at length in the preceding chapters of this thesis. The history of the institution would not be complete, however, without an analysis of the contributions that the school made to its graduates and to the communities in which they have migrated.

It has been estimated that more than 5000 students attended Yancey Collegiate Institute during the twenty-five years it operated. These students have spread throughout the United States from Maine to California and from Florida to Puget Sound, to serve humanity and enrich the various fields of endeavor they chose to follow.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Professional Fields

Apparently more graduates have entered the teaching profession than any other single field. While many of these have chosen to make their contribution as a classroom teacher, many others have distinguished themselves as outstanding

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<sup>1</sup> James Hutchins, A Sketch of Yancey Collegiate Institute, (Burnsville: Edwards Printing Company, 1951) p. 32-33.



school administrators. Among these are James Hutchins, one of the first graduates of the institution, who has served as a teacher and superintendent of schools in Yancey County. A. J. Hutchins taught at Yancey Collegiate Institute after graduation from college. He later became principal of Lee Edwards High School in Asheville and has served as superintendent of Haywood County schools for the past 27 years. Miss Hope Buck has served as teacher, principal and superintendent of schools in Yancey County. Frank W. Howell, the present superintendent, has put forth great efforts for the past seven years toward improving the educational program in Yancey. Herrick Roland has been recognized as a great educator through the work he is doing in Wilmington, North Carolina. E. D. Wilson, W. B. Robertson, Jr., L. C. McCurry, Ed Warrick, Quinton Warrick and Murray Honeycutt are all serving as school administrators at the present time.<sup>2</sup>

Many students pursued medical careers upon graduation from Yancey Collegiate Institute. Among these are Dr. W. L. Bennett, who still practices as a medical doctor in Burnsville. Dr. George Wheeler of Spartanburg, South Carolina, has been recognized as an authority on pellagra. Dr. George Holcombe has served as head of a large sanitorium in Oklahoma. Dr. L. W. Woody is practicing dentistry in Spruce Pine, North

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Carolina. Other outstanding doctors include Dr. Arthur B. English of Bristol, Tennessee, Dr. Kenneth Wilson and the late Dr. D. M. Buck, Jr. of Asheville.<sup>3</sup>

Among those who pursued legal professions and became outstanding lawyers are D. R. Fouts, Charles Hutchins, C. P. Randolph, Robert Wilson, William Anglin, all of Burnsville, and Frank Huskins, who practiced law in Burnsville before receiving an appointment in 1951 as chairman of the North Carolina Industrial Commission. Other outstanding lawyers include Fred Wilson of Portland, Oregon; Walter Berry of Bakersville; Roy McCurry of McMinnville, Oregon; and Jeter McCurry of Aberdeen, Washington.<sup>4</sup>

Two graduates have attained high positions as state officials in North Carolina. R. G. Deyton served as Assistant Director of the Budget before becoming treasurer of the multi-million dollar Ecusta Corporation. In May, 1952 he accepted the vice-presidency of Wake Forest College. Nathan Yelton is now serving as secretary of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System in Raleigh. He has also served as superintendent of schools in Mitchell County.

These that have been listed are only a small number of professional men that graduated from Yancey Collegiate

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3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

Institute. Doubtless, there are numerous others that have attained great success in their respective professions.

### The Business Fields

The writer is personally acquainted with numerous graduates that have been successful in various business fields. Literally hundreds could be named, but it would be impossible to produce a complete list.

Some of those who are best known in the vicinity of Burnsville are Rush Wray, manager of the Nu-Wray Inn and outstanding in dramatics and civic affairs. James Anglin attained the rank of captain in the army during the last war. He is now a successful merchant in Burnsville. L. P. Banks has long been noted as one of western North Carolina's most successful poultry farmers. C. L. Byrd and W. P. Honeycutt are retired railway postal clerks. Carl B. Hyatt, who served as juvenile judge in Asheville, has written a book, Gateway To Citizenship.

Thomas R. Byrd has been very successful as a banker and insurance agent in Washington, D. C. Carl Honeycutt of Topeka, Kansas, holds a high position with a rubber manufacturing company there. Cleophus Tipton has developed a very profitable real estate business in Washington, D. C.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



Numerous farmers, merchants, postal clerks, state employees, and other businessmen who have succeeded in their respective businesses in Yancey and surrounding counties are former students of Yancey Collegiate Institute.

### Intangible Benefits

It is impossible to determine the total contributions of any institution such as Yancey Collegiate Institute. Many of the former students have traveled to the far corners of the earth in pursuit of success and happiness. Only a very few could be contacted. Even if it were possible to contact every former student the total benefits still could not be determined. The ideals that were developed, the educational incentives that resulted from the institution, and numerous other benefits are still influencing thousands of people who are associated with former students of the institution.

It has been estimated that those students who entered the profession of teaching and school administration have influenced or are now influencing the lives of 150,000 children throughout the United States.<sup>6</sup> Contributions of this type will continue to live on for generations.

The courts that once tried a murder case in nearly

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

every session of court that was held in Yancey County have averaged only one case every ten years since the school reached the peak of its influence in 1926. Illegal whiskey sales have almost diminished. Prostitution is no longer a serious social problem that once threatened the moral standards of the county.<sup>7</sup>

These are only a few of the many contributions that can only be measured in the minds of conscientious citizens.

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<sup>7</sup> E. F. Watson, Personal Interview with the Author, Spruce Pine, North Carolina, February 9, 1952.

## CHAPTER X

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Yancey Collegiate Institute was begun as a result of serious considerations and careful planning on the part of those citizens of Yancey County who realized the great need for religious education. These people had been faced with the social problems of illiteracy, intoxication, public disturbances, prostitution, murder and the like for many years. The religious and public minded people reached the conclusion in the 1890's that a good secondary education for its youth would help to solve some of these problems in the future.

The school was planned and the building was built. The first school opened in 1901 with three teachers and a limited number of students. The Southern Baptist Convention had also realized the need for better schools in the Southern Appalachian Mountain region and had allotted funds for the aid of denominational schools through the State and Home Mission boards. Yancey Collegiate Institute was fortunate in being able to secure a large portion of these funds from the time it opened in 1901 until the state-supported high schools began offering serious competition to the school in the early 1920's.

The school was controlled by a board of 18 trustees



and one member of the Home Mission Board. This body of men planned the building program, selected the teachers, secured financial aid and formed the general policies of the school during the 25 years that it operated. The board was elected by the Yancey Baptist Association, and was responsible to it at all times.

The school prospered greatly for more than twenty years, growing from a three-teacher school with very few students in 1901 to a twelve-teacher school and 350 students in 1922.

Students were accepted from any state in the South that was a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, and at least seven states were represented during the schools existence. Most of the enrollment, however, was made up of students from Yancey and nearby counties.

The curriculum, which was limited at first, was expanded and revised as the school grew. College preparatory courses were emphasized at all times. Vocational courses were offered from time to time to be elected by students having special interests in them.

The school strove constantly to develop high moral and spiritual ideals in its students. Students were taught to study and respect the Bible and the doctrines of the Baptist denomination. Regular attendance of church services was required of all students.

The school attained some high scholastic goals. In 1922 it was accepted as a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. It succeeded in seeing 80 per cent of its graduates enter college before 1923.

Yancey Collegiate Institute was never free from debts. The board of trustees went in debt for the first building. Before this could be paid for dormitories were needed. These were built with a great increase in the school's indebtedness. In all there were seven buildings built by the school. Some funds for the buildings were donated by the State and Home Mission boards and the local citizens were expected to raise the remaining amount, but they were never able to produce sufficient funds to pay the debts.

In 1913 plans were begun to build state-supported high schools in the outlying communities of Yancey County. These plans were carried out and by the end of the First World War these schools began offering serious competition to the Baptist-supported school. The competition increased year by year until in 1924 Yancey Collegiate Institute was forced to release two of its teachers. In 1925 the number was again reduced. By the time the Yancey Baptist Association met in 1925 it had become evident that Yancey Collegiate Institute could no longer operate under its present financial strain and competition from other schools. The situation was presented to the people, and it was decided that the school would

be sold to the Yancey County Board of Education, to be taken over by them at the end of the 1925-1926 school term.

Yancey Collegiate Institute was a result of years of hard work on the part of many interested individuals. It required great sacrifices from those who were willing to give their time and money for its purpose. Although it failed in its efforts to remain open as long as its patrons had hoped it would, it succeeded in offering one of life's greatest gifts, a liberal education, to hundreds of students who, without it, would never have had the opportunity to go to high school and college. Many of the early supporters of the school are still reaping the harvests of their labors as they watch former students of the school succeed in their various fields of endeavor and great contributions to humanity.

Yancey Collegiate Institute no longer has any tangible form, but its influences are still evident in the lives of thousands. These will live indefinitely.



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## APPENDIX

## THE YANCEY COLLEGIATE SCHOOL SONG

There's a High School in a sunny, southern land,  
And we love, yes, love it well.  
Every year we gather there, a happy band,  
For we love, yes, love it well.

Everybody tips his hat to Y. C. I.,  
'Tis our own dear High School home,  
And we never shall forget old Y. C. I.  
Wheresoever we may roam.

## Chorus:

We're the girls of Y. C. I. Rah! Rah!  
We're the boys of Y. C. I. Rah! Rah!  
We're the boys and girls of Western Carolina.  
We're the boys and girls of Western Carolina.  
Oh! Clear and high ring out the cry for Y. C. I.  
Ready all to shout the call for Y. C. I.  
Clear the way, prepare the fray for Y. C. I.  
We are marching on to victory.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1923-1924

August 20	Students Arrive.
August 21	Classification and Registration.
August 25	Reception for new Students.
October 17-18	Mid-Term Examinations.
November 29	Thanksgiving.
December 1	Eusthesian-Aurorian Anniversary.
December 21	Fall Term Closes.
December 29	Students Arrive
December 30	Registrations and Classification.
February 22	Annual Inter-Society Debate
February 27-28	Mid-Term Examinations.
March 8	Dialectic-Huffonian Anniversary.
May 6	Session Closes.



## COURSE OF STUDY

1919-1920

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>FALL TERM</u>	<u>SPRING TERM</u>
Freshmen	History English Latin Math Science	History English Latin Science Math
Sophomore	History Math English Latin Science	History Math English Latin Science
Junior	History Math English Latin Home Economics Sociology French Bible	History Math English Latin Home Economics Sociology French Bible
Senior	English Math Latin French Home Economics Bible Civics	English Math Latin French Home Economics Bible Pedagogy